



Director of Safeguarding, Kai Whakahaumaru, Reflects on New Role

Sonia Pope, MCNZ Kai Whakahaumaru

Two months ago I began my appointment as Kai Whakahaumaru, the Director of Safeguarding for the Methodist Church of New Zealand. It is a role that carries great responsibility and great hope.

Over recent weeks, I have had the privilege of meeting some of you in person and online. I look forward with joy to building deeper relationships with many more across our church whānau.

I am of Tongan and Niuean heritage, baptised and raised in the Methodist Church. Once an old girl and head student of Wesley College, I am now a fully registered educational psychologist, with over six years of practice; and the first Tongan educational psychologist in New Zealand. My career has been dedicated to creating safe and nurturing spaces within schools for students, teachers, families, and communities. It is this same knowledge, passion, and calling that I now bring into the life of the church to ensure our churches are safe places not only for children and the vulnerable, but also for our ministers, leaders, congregations, and wider communities.

Alongside this, I have served as a professional teaching clinician at Massey University, equipping future psychologists with the skills to turn theory into practice, particularly in the area of cultural competence. This is a principle I long to see in our church, where our faith is not only spoken but lived out in action. In this way, our commitment to being a bicultural church can be carried with understanding and confidence, so we may walk together in true unity.

My call to this role was deeply shaped by the recommendations of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse and our church's bold response in creating a Safeguarding Director role. This moment is significant, our church taking a stand against abuse, embracing accountability, and seeking healing for those who have been hurt. I have stepped into this ministry to tautoko (support) this sacred work, to help ensure our church is safe, protected, and flourishing for generations to come. May safeguarding always reflect God's heart for justice, compassion, and wholeness within our Methodist family.

I believe I have been called into this ministry because safeguarding flows naturally from both my faith and my profession as a psychologist. At its heart, safeguarding is an expression of the Gospel. It is about protecting, nurturing, and honouring every person as made in the image of God. By building safe and supportive environments, we make visible God's love, promote wellbeing and justice, and live out Christ's example of servant leadership.

While this role carries great responsibility, it also carries great hope. My immediate focus is to become familiar with our church such as its systems, processes, and strengths, while also listening carefully for the gaps, the areas of concern, and the priorities that need attention. Out of this, I have already had the privilege of developing our very first Child Protection Policy, designed to be practical, sustainable, and enduring, so that the safety and wellbeing of our children and young people remain at the heart of our life together.

Equally important is resourcing and equipping our ordained ministers and leaders. My goal is to provide training and tools in key safeguarding skills, such as conflict resolution, restorative

practice, crisis management, suicide prevention, psychological first aid, and wellbeing practices. These skills not only safeguard our communities but also nurture the holistic wellbeing of those in ministry. I also hope to strengthen our ability to communicate effectively, manage stress, and prevent burnout, so that our leaders can serve with joy and resilience.

Looking ahead, my vision is that safeguarding becomes deeply woven into the fabric of our church. I imagine our churches thriving as safe havens where children can play, grow, and develop both their individual, cultural and spiritual identities; where our matua (elders) are honoured as tuakana, passing down wisdom and faith that sustains the life of the church; and where every member of our whānau feels protected, valued, and empowered to flourish.

This is the safeguarding ministry I pray to nurture, a ministry that ensures our church is not only safe, but also a vibrant, nurturing, and Spirit-filled home for all of God's people.

But this vision is not mine alone, it is ours together as the body of Christ. Safeguarding is a shared calling, a shared responsibility, and a shared blessing. As Paul reminds us: "*Let all that you do be done in love*" (1 Corinthians 16:14).

I give thanks to God and to our church whānau for entrusting me with this sacred calling. May we journey together as a safe, resilient, and Spirit-led church where every person is cherished as a child of God. I close with this prayer: that our steps as a church be guided by God's love, that our communities flourish in safety and care, and that the love of Christ remains the firm foundation upon which we build our present and our future. Amen.



AROUND THE CONNEXION

Creative Expo a Superb Forum for Sharing



Deacon Margaret Birtles, Waikato Waiariki Superintendency team.

A creative expo hosted by the Waikato Waiariki Synod gave people a unique opportunity to share a variety of God-given gifts with their parish and their community.

As Church we can be very busy worshipping God, doing meetings and providing support for parishioners. However, it is important that we also recognise the special gifts we are given. That was the reason Te Awamutu Methodist Church hosted the Creative Expo in September.

Talented people shared their gifts of art, soap making, weaving, Lego construction, knitting, dolls, quilting, cross-stitch, card making and journaling, writing music/poetry, bee keeping and plants. The church choir performed as well as a soloist. At the end of the day there was a skit on the *Impatient Caterpillar*, based on the Conference 2024 theme, *Don't just change – Transform*.

The folk from Te Awamutu provided gracious hospitality, with lunch and morning tea. Those who attended had opportunities to learn new crafts from some of the exhibitors.

It was a very beneficial day both for those exhibiting and those attending. Our Synod recommends this is as a great activity for showcasing and sharing talents and skills.



Statement of Support for the Recognition of a Palestinian State

MCNZ President Te Aroha Rountree

Two days after Winston Peters announced the decision that NZ will not recognise a Palestinian State, MCNZ leaders released a statement decrying the stance as morally cowardly. We share the statement.

In acknowledgement and response to a statement made on the 27th of September 2025, by our Foreign Minister Winston Peters who said that New Zealand will not recognise a Palestinian state at this time, pointing to ongoing conflict, uncertainty over future governance, and a Hamas presence in Gaza.

Recognition of statehood is not just a symbolic act, it is a recognition of the rights of a people under occupation. Delaying recognition suggests the government is prioritising strategic caution over universal human rights. Aotearoa New Zealand has historically positioned itself in foreign affairs with a degree of moral diplomacy—nuclear-free status, advocating human rights, supporting international law. Delaying or refusing recognition of a Palestinian state in the current global context should be seen as diverging from that tradition. The government argues that recognition now might “reward” or embolden Hamas, complicating peace efforts. But there is counter-argument that recognition could instead increase pressure on all parties towards negotiation, and lend weight to international law standards.

Within Aotearoa, public sentiment (especially among younger/marginalised people) tends toward seeing recognition of Palestinian statehood as a moral imperative and long overdue. The government’s reluctance in this matter continues to breed disillusionment and/or accusations of moral cowardice. If the government truly believes in the principle of self-determination and in a two-state solution, it needs to show that through action—as well as words. Recognition of a Palestinian state is not simply emblematic—it is an important piece in the architecture of peace; the government’s current stance may miss an important opportunity to contribute meaningfully towards that architecture.

For us as Methodist Christians, the delay in recognising Palestine as a state is a failure to embody the prophetic witness the Church is called to bear—standing with the marginalised and affirming the God-given humanity of all peoples. Recognition is not a reward for power structures, but a statement of faith in peace through justice. Aotearoa’s moral legacy calls for bold compassion, not pragmatic silence. We must not wait for the perfect conditions to affirm what is right. Let us hear the prophetic words of a Christian Palestinian Children’s Prayer for Gaza, which sings of freedom that must be proclaimed—even amid darkness. “The sun of freedom will rise even if there were a hundred Herods. Tell them the sun of freedom will rise. Our land will return to us.”

Ngā manaakitanga,

Te Aroha Rountree

President - Methodist Church of New Zealand | Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa



The Pururi Centre in Takapuna is a prime example of 'property as mission'. Church buildings provide spaces for community, culture and spirituality to meet.

Property as Mission – Taonga or Burden?

Rev Peter Norman, Vice President MCNZ

**Do we own our buildings - or do they own us?
This uncomfortable question echoes across Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa.**

Our churches, halls, and parsonages have long been places of memory, worship, and belonging. They are taonga — sacred treasures woven into whakapapa and community life. Yet for many parishes, those same buildings now feel like heavy burdens: expensive to insure, difficult to repair, earthquake-prone, and increasingly disconnected from the neighbourhoods around them. So, are our properties taonga or burdens? The answer depends on how we choose to use them — and how courageously we allow the Wairua Tapu (Holy Spirit) to reshape our imagination.

Whenua and Taonga: A Māori Lens

From a te ao Māori perspective, whenua (land) is never just real estate. It is not a commodity to be traded, but a place of connection — to ancestors, to community, to identity, and to Atua. Property is not simply an asset to be managed, but a covenantal trust. As kaitiaki (guardians), our duty is to care for the land and the buildings upon it in ways that honour whakapapa and protect generations yet to come. That means recognising wāhi tapu (sacred places), consulting with hapū and iwi, and ensuring property decisions are shaped by partnership and respect. To treat property only as a financial problem is to miss its deeper spiritual reality: land holds mana and wairua.

Te Taiao: Property in a Climate-Changed World

But today te taiao (the natural world) is groaning. Rising seas lap at coastal cemeteries. Storms batter ageing halls. Insurance costs soar as climate risk intensifies. Te taiao reminds us that our buildings are not invincible fortresses, but fragile vessels in an uncertain age.

The Church has begun to respond: Pūtea Tiaki Taiao (green grants) for solar panels and insulation; resilience planning for floods and earthquakes; encouragement for parishes to prepare emergency protocols. But the deeper question remains: are our properties aligned with God's mission for justice in creation? Could we imagine every church property as a climate-resilient hub — warm, dry, energy-efficient, open to the neighbourhood daily, and a sanctuary of safety and care in times of crisis? If we are serious about being a Church for the 21st century, this is not optional. It is gospel.

Wesleyan Guardianship: For the Common Good

John Wesley was clear: property is a gift entrusted for the common good. In his sermon *The Use of Money* (1744), he urged Methodists to "gain all you can, save all you can, give all you can." For Wesley, buildings and wealth had no purpose apart from serving God's mission of grace and justice.

That Wesleyan spirit calls us to be bold. Are our halls sitting empty six days a week while community groups scramble for space? Do we preserve heritage buildings with pride, or cling to them in fear? Are our parsonages a blessing to presbyters, or do they lock us into unsustainable models?

The early Methodists were not afraid to preach in fields, factories, and market squares. They knew mission was about people, not property. Yet they also built chapels and schools where they were most needed — spaces that served both gospel and community. That is our challenge today.

The Realities We Face

The Connexional Property Strategy has already named hard truths:

- Insurance premiums are crippling many parishes.
- Seismic compliance demands are looming.
- Residential properties must meet Healthy Homes standards by 2025.
- Heritage buildings require specialised (and costly) care.
- Small congregations struggle to maintain vast buildings designed for another era.
- Meanwhile, Aotearoa faces a housing crisis: thousands without secure homes while church land sits under-utilised.

The question is unavoidable: does our property serve the mission of the Church — or does the mission of the Church serve our property?

Stories of Transformation

Across the Connexion, signs of courage are emerging:

- Parishes partnering with social housing providers, Methodist Missions, and local trusts to turn under-used halls and land into homes for vulnerable whānau.
- Churches re-imagining themselves as multi-use hubs — worship, counselling, foodbanks, language schools, arts and recovery groups all under one roof.
- Pasifika congregations in Sinoti Samoa and Vahefonua Tonga maintaining property as cultural-spiritual bases, where church land is not only for worship but also to preserve language, custom, and intergenerational identity.
- Synods developing shared-space agreements that honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi, weaving Māori and Tauīwi together in covenant partnership.
- Local congregations making bold choices to release ageing buildings and invest the proceeds in digital outreach, lay leadership, and community mission.

These are not simply property projects. They are acts of faith. They show that when property is treated as taonga, it becomes a vessel of new life. When treated only as burden, it drains our energy and distracts us from God's call.

Toward a Vision of Property as Mission

What might it look like if we fully embraced property as mission?

- Every building planned not just for worship but for whakawhanaungatanga (relationship-building), community resilience, intercultural encounter, and justice.
- Every property decision beginning with consultation with tangata whenua, listening to the stories of the land.
- Every parish asking how its property might serve housing needs, youth initiatives, ecological renewal, and the creative arts.
- Every choice weighed not by *"what can we afford to keep?"* but by *"what does the gospel call us to release?"*

A Closing Challenge

Our buildings are not neutral. They tell stories. They can tell stories of decline and fear, or stories of courage and hope.

The real question is not whether our properties are taonga or burdens. The real question is whether we are willing to let them be transformed — to open the doors, to share the land, to risk new ways of being Church.

And a proviso must be clear: all property guardianship in Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa must be shaped by kaupapa Māori and deep respect for mana whenua. Without this grounding, property becomes transactional. With it, property becomes covenantal — whenua as ancestor, taonga as sacred trust, buildings as vessels for justice and wairua.

What story will our mokopuna (grandchildren) tell about how we used our taonga? Will they thank us for treasures that enabled mission, or shake their heads at burdens we refused to release?

The choice is ours — and the time is now.



Hospital Chaplaincy Discovery; Where is the Church?

Ray Coats

I am currently undertaking locum chaplaincy work in a regional hospital. What was originally going to be only for a few weeks in November 2023 has turned out to be much longer.

The work, and its importance in the healing process, has been such that I am happy to continue to serve in this way. I do, however, wonder why the church does not see the importance of this way of reaching out to those who are searching for answers in a time of need. I recently read an article on the Progressive Involvement website, discussing declining church membership. Three questions stood out, "Are you a None, a Done, or a Discouraged?" "Are you curious why the church is out of tune with today's times?" and "How might these people be attracted to a 21st century understanding of church and Jesus?"

The article defined a 'None' as one who has little or no experience with the church or the Bible. A 'Done' is one who reports having been involved but indicates that it doesn't work for them anymore. A 'Discouraged' is one who may have remained nominally involved but is rarely seen or has left because they feel worship and beliefs are of a former time. The article states that increasingly, people searching for hope, trust and contentment believe religion is not for them, irrelevant in the scientific age.

I realised that the article content applied to the chaplaincy work I am doing. Most of our patients are in their later years. A significant number of them fit into one of the categories mentioned. Importantly, for me, most of them have not lost an awareness or sense of spirituality. Lying in a hospital bed, facing the fact of mortality, and having time to brood, can raise spiritual questions that have not been faced for many years. Who can help answer these questions?

Obviously, because I am involved in chaplaincy, I would have to say a chaplain. My experience is that chaplains are happily accepted in the hospital system. Importantly, they have the independence to be neutral in faith affiliations but remain true to their beliefs. They have time to talk. Like health recovery, spiritual discovery - or rediscovery - can be a slow process. But daily we see evidence that discovery and rediscovery does happen. We are not proselytising, and we are privileged to be able and available to do some spiritual shepherding.

All this is well and good, but I return to my original question, "Where is the Church"? Since I started doing this chaplaincy, I have received not one request from either a minister, pastor, priest, or church leader, to contact any particular patient. Nor have my colleagues.

This worries me for surely here is a situation where we, as Christians, can show that we do care. That the love of God in us, motivates us to gently encourage those in need to find the comfort and hope that we know God provides. From my long experience of involvement with various denominations, I must ask, "Are we, as churches, so blinded by our obsession with numbers that we have lost sight of our servanthood? This is not a rhetorical question. I have no quick answers, no silver bullets. But within my sense of working in isolation, I can only grieve for those who miss out on rediscovering faith because no-one is there to help lead them back to it.

I firmly believe that if members of a church community are truly following the "loving your neighbour" command, they should be aware of those in our communities who may be admitted or about to be admitted to hospital. The gentleman down the road whose family rarely visit. The woman who needs home help to be able to remain in her much-loved home. Just let us know. We will try to do the rest! We are not looking for more work, but we do not want to miss those shepherding opportunities.



When Theological Education Becomes Toxic

Rev Dr Nasili Vaka'uta, Principal Trinity Theological College

Theological education should bring life. It should liberate minds, deepen faith, and empower leaders to serve communities with courage and compassion. But what happens when theological education becomes a tool of control?

When theological education silences voices, marginalizes cultures, and protects power instead of speaking truth to it; that is when it becomes toxic.

Across Aotearoa and Oceania, many of us know this toxicity too well. We've seen it in seminaries that prioritise Western theology while treating our stories as "contextual side dishes." We've felt it in classrooms where students are trained to repeat doctrine rather than wrestle with life's complexity. And we've heard it in the dismissive tone of theologians who label anything Indigenous, feminist, or queer as theologically suspect.

One example is Myk Habets of Laidlaw College, whose work represents a broader trend in theological circles: the defense of what's called "classical orthodoxy." This approach leans heavily on ancient creeds and Western philosophical ideas about God—immutability, omnipotence, impassibility—and often resists any theology rooted in local context or lived struggle.

Habets accuses decolonial, liberation, and contextual theologies of being too political, too revisionist, or not rigorous enough. But here's the thing: theology is always political. The idea that Western theology is "neutral" while theologies from the margins are "biased" is a fiction. All theology is done from somewhere. The question is: who does it serve?

Too often, the theology upheld in our institutions serves empire, not people. It protects privilege, silences Indigenous wisdom, and continues a legacy of colonial domination disguised as doctrinal purity.

This is why we need a transformative turn.

A transformative approach to theological education begins in relationship—with land, ancestors, community, and each other. It asks: *What does it mean to do theology in the Moana, in Oceania, in colonised lands where the wounds of mission and empire still bleed?* For us, theology is not just about ideas. It's about life. It's about *vā*, *whenua* and *whakapapa*. It's about reclaiming our right to name God in our own tongues, from our own stories. When theological education becomes toxic, it must be called out—not to tear it down, but to set it free.

We need theological spaces that welcome diverse voices, challenge oppressive systems, and form leaders who care more about justice than jargon. We need pedagogy that embraces orality, ritual, and creativity—not just essays and exams. We need institutions that stop gatekeeping and start listening.

Theology began at the margins—in occupied Palestine, among fishermen, tax collectors, and outcasts. It is time it returned there. Let us learn, again, to do theology that brings life.



The Little Shop That Could!

Betsy Galloway, Whangaparoa Methodist Parish Office Administrator

In September 2020, with COVID in full swing, Whangaparoa Methodist Parish inherited a bookshop, called *Book Heaven*, from a businessman who was unable to sustain it. It has been a blessing for the parish and the community.

With the help of a small but dedicated crew, we cleaned the place up and opened with a half-stocked shop and no functioning Eftpos. It was an election year and as people entered the church to vote, they saw the shop. Since that day, we have not looked back. Parish finances had been struggling, however to our amazement this past year the shop grossed over \$100,000. We tease that we are paying our presbyter's salary. In fact, we are doing that and more.

We have overcome recurrent flooding in 2020 and in 2022 and now have a protective drainage system with bookshelves on mini stilts. The walls are lined with books, and along with two rows of central double-sided shelving, accommodate the 10,000 volumes we typically have at any one time. We have a children's section, a classics section, a New Zealand authors section, several special interest sections and a religious section.

Our philosophy is to serve our community as best we can. Expenses are few. We rely entirely on volunteer staffing and all books are donated. We carefully curate the books we are offered and select those that will be saleable. The prices are low, the books are clean and often we receive a recently released novel, before it is available in the local library.

In serving our community, we get to know our neighbours. Our presbyter, Rev Sione Tesimale, often sits at the back of the shop, doing his work and chatting with customers. The local recycling outlet staff have become our best friends. We frequently pick up books from older donors, and a local retirement village. We helped one household clear their hoarded collection. Some days we offer impromptu counselling to people in distress. On one occasion a customer was extremely concerned about her neighbour who was feeling suicidal. With our support, she was able to call the family of her neighbour, and police. A helicopter went out searching; the person was found, after wandering overnight.

Another customer buys bibles to give away to others. Many of our regulars receive reduced rates as they return the books they have read. Students and children always are welcomed and given discounted rates. Dogs are our well-behaved guests and they are offered a fresh water bowl in summer.

Our volunteers have been surprisingly consistent over the five years we have been operating. They enjoy this opportunity to welcome others and they themselves feel rewarded. Our Google rating is excellent, and customer satisfaction rating is usually 5-star. This is indeed, The Little Shop That Does.



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I welcome your feedback on content included in this publication.

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Radio Making Waves Sharing Music and Ministry

A weekly programme on Palmerston North's community radio, Manawātū People's Radio (MPR), hosted by Gillian and John Thornley from Wesley Broadway, provides a valuable opportunity for outreach ministry benefitting church and community.

Programmes include music, interviews and church news. A replay of two selections of songs by Marlon Williams, Māori singer/songwriter, originally aired in May, were replayed in October to mark Te Wiki o te Reo Māori (Māori Language Week), September 14 to 20. Marlon Williams' tour of Aotearoa during 2025 was a significant bicultural event, bridge-building between iwi and Pakeha.

Playing the indigenous hymns published by the New Zealand Hymnbook Trust is a continuing programme feature. MPR has all the CD recordings on their database, originally released in support of the Trust's four collections: Alleluia Aotearoa, Carol our Christmas, Faith Forever Singing and Hope Is Our Song. A unique resource held by MPR are the NZ hymns featured on TV One's Praise Be programmes fronted by Graeme Thomson.

Playing secular music gives listeners an awareness of the spirituality found in pop music. Elvis Presley, Aretha Franklin, Johnny Cash and Dave Dobbyn, all began their singing in church choirs and congregations.

Talk programmes include members of Wesley Broadway's Agape Fellowship sharing how they support people living with physical and mental disabilities. During October two members of a local Probus group will discuss how the Probus club offers social support, appreciated by those living on their own. Wesley Broadway's partnership with Manawātū Peoples' Radio provides an outreach ministry, not only live within a 50 kilometre radius of Palmerston North but, worldwide, as programmes can be accessed through the Internet.

The Wesley Broadway programmes are live on National Radio AM999 every Tuesday and Saturday, at 11am. For those that have not yet discovered the waiata of Marlon Williams, we recommend you download them from MPR. Then go and buy a copy of his latest CD Tiwekaweka (Messy House). Fourteen songs all in te reo Māori. A national taonga!



CARTOON



The wrong side of ...

Jim's Cartoon

Brendan Boughen

Our regular cartoon from Jim, that finds the funny, and sometimes not so funny, side of faith.



A Christian Perspective on Mental Health

Silvia Purdie

The statistics about mental health in Aotearoa are truly depressing. Stress and distress, anxiety and loneliness are the hallmarks of our age, and a daily reality for many. The Christian response begins and ends with love.

This is the first in a series of three reflections on mental health aimed at equipping all Christians with the skills

and confidence to make a difference, and encouraging churches to regard this as a vital mission priority.

As we are made and remade in God's faithful loving kindness, in receiving that for ourselves, we can offer it to others. This is easier said than done. Stressed and upset people may withdraw or attack. Hurt people hurt people. We need understanding and skills to be calm and effective in pastoral conversations. A Christian model of mental health helps us understand how people react to feeling unsafe. God made us humans with an extraordinary capacity for experience; hearts, minds, body and soul, we are vivid creatures. We feel things intensely, which is great when we are well, and terrible when we are low. Mental illness happens when people get stuck in the negative experiences. Good pastoral care helps release people from these trapped and lonely places, bringing God's peace. Jesus is our teacher, and his Spirit is our primary resource.

We are made, together with our animal cousins, to react immediately to threat to keep ourselves and those around us safe. What we experience as the 'negative' emotions of anger, fear and depression are God-given reactions designed for our survival. God has also given us the amazing ability to recover from painful experiences, to return to a place of peace and joy.

It helps to be aware of the impact of feeling unsafe. How do you feel when you sense threat? What happens in your body? Threats come in subtle ways – a critical remark made in passing, an email from the boss – as well as very real threats such as marital breakdown, housing insecurity or poverty. Notice your own 'fight-flight-freeze' response. Do you rise towards a problem with anger or solving energy? Do you want to run and hide? Do you collapse or blame yourself? These are the substance of mental health patterns that become established as aggression, anxiety or depression. From your own experience of these, what have you learned about what helps? Here are my top three.

The number one practical Bible teaching is the importance of rest. Why are we so bad at keeping the 3rd Commandment, to rest? Most of us struggle to rest for even an hour, let alone a whole day every week! Without rest, our brains stay in fight-mode, which over time wears away at our resilience. What enables you to properly relax? Where do you feel truly safe?

The next most important thing for mental wellness is not obvious in scripture because the Bible authors took it for granted – physical exercise and connecting with the natural world. Jesus went out, every day (Luke 4:42). He walked on hills and by rivers of living fresh water. Looking after our bodies and honouring God's creation are central teachings in scripture.

Third, God has made us for community. The church is founded on the call to be body together, to need each other even in our brokenness. Nuclear family is not adequate protection from mental illness. In gathering as people of faith, hope and love, we uphold one another and express the love of God for each other. Are the activities in your church life truly safe relational spaces where people can share their struggles, and where new people are actively welcome?

Emotional distress and chronic stress are all around us. The good news is that the Christian faith is a profound and helpful source of wellbeing and recovery. It is time to sharpen our skills and grow our confidence, as individuals and as churches.



He Inoi mo Tangiteroria

Eva Pirini, a Taitokerau Rohe member from the Kaipara takiwā.

This heartfelt reflection blends personal memory and collective history and reminds us that the memory of ancestors is never lost; it lives on through story, marae, churches, hapori, and whānau.

Eva's reflection is a gentle reminder that history is not distant, it is personal. Story is the accompanying guide on the journey providing connection and hope for future generations.

Preface written by Rev Keita Hotere

In Memory of Stephen R Fordyce 13 June 1947 – 13 August 2025

Stephen Fordyce's *Tangiteroria: Crucible of the Kaipara 1836–54, Missionary Impulse & Impact* offers a deeply researched account of a pivotal yet often overlooked era in Kaipara history. His work highlights Tangiteroria as a centre of Methodist mission, exploring the complex relationships between Pākehā missionaries and Māori communities. Fordyce examines the Wesleyan mission's dual legacy—sharing education, literacy, and Christian fellowship, alongside the cultural misunderstandings and pressures of colonisation.

For the Methodist Takiwā of Kaipara and Te Tai Tokerau, this history is significant. It anchors today's church in its formative years, documenting early missionaries' lives and engagement with local hapū. His work reminds us that Methodism here was shaped through dialogue with Māori values and aspirations, and that partnership and kotahitanga remain central to our mission.

He mihi aroha tēnei ki a Stephen, he tumuaki o mua o Ruawai College, nāna tēnei pukapuka i waihanga, ā, i tuku atu hei taonga tuku iho. Completing this work at Ruawai and gifting it back to the Kaipara people, Stephen offered more than history - he gave a taonga that honours our shared past and challenges us to live the gospel with integrity. His scholarship calls us to reflect honestly on both the spiritual fruits and colonial impacts of missionary work, seeking justice, reconciliation, and hope as we continue the Wesleyan journey together.

E te Atua Atawhai,
Ka whakawhetai mātou mō te taonga o Tangiteroria,
ngā Mihinare, ngā Rangatira Māori me ngā hapori i kawē te tūmanako me te mātauranga.
Awhinatia mātou kia whai tika, kia kotahitanga, ka hora te rongopai me te aroha i ēnei rā.
Āmene.

Reflection and prayer by Eva Pirini



Koroturaga host Fijian Deputy Prime Minister and Father's Day

Iliesa Tora

The Koroturaga Fijian congregation hosted two events in September that brought congregation members together, along with the wider Fijian community.

On 8 September, members of the congregation joined the Fiji community and the Fiji High Commission to host Fiji's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade, Honourable Manoa Kamikamica at the church's new hall. The minister led a delegation from Fiji on a Trade Mission to New Zealand, visiting Wellington and Auckland. The delegation met with members of the Koroturaga congregation and the wider community on the night they arrived and were accorded a traditional Fijian ceremony of welcome.

That was followed by a 'Talanoa' session, where the minister and his group shared their government's progress and plans focused on raising Fiji's economy, and investment opportunities. Parish Superintendent Rev Joeli Ducivaki, blessed the meeting and thanked the Deputy Prime Minister and the Government of Fiji for showing love in allocating a piece of land for people of Tuvalu who might want to relocate to Fiji because of the climate change issues they face.

Rev Ducivaki told Hon Kamikamica that the church in New Zealand supports the work done by governments in the Pacific who are assisting island nations that need relocation because of the threat of sea level rise.

Fathers Celebrated

On 14 September, Fijian congregations around New Zealand celebrated and remembered fathers on Father's Day. The day saw fathers leading services and taking part in sharing the gospel messages.

In Wellington, the fathers celebrated the day with members of the new Masterton Fijian congregation, who travelled down to join their comrades in the capital city. It was a great day of celebration, with a sumptuous feast after the special service. A cake to honour the day was baked and gifted by the Koroturaga Fiji congregation's Vakatawa Rusiate Takalaiyale and wife Mereseini.

All Black George Bower, son of former Fijian congregation 'vakatawa' Niko Bower and parish staff Kula, attended the service. He was raised within the congregation. Members of the Rotorua Fijian congregation also shared the day with their fathers.

There was one unanimous conclusion after the day of celebrations – fathers have a crucial role to play within their families, church and community.